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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 000152

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2032

TAGS: PREL PGOV CH TW

SUBJECT: CHINA URGES UNITED STATES TO BAR MEDIA, PUBLIC EVENTS FOR CHEN SHUI-BIAN TRANSIT STOPS

REF: A. BEIJING 0001

1B. BEIJING 0116

1C. JANUARY 8 EAP PRESS GUIDANCE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires David S. Sedney. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) China urges the United States to prevent Chen Shui-bian from conducting public or media events during his upcoming transit stops in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei told the Charge January 8. Expressing China's strong dissatisfaction over and continued opposition to the transits, AFM He said Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing called Secretary Rice from Botswana January 7 to discuss the issue. Chen and his allies are embarking on a high-risk plan to push for de jure independence through the "second republic" approach. China requests that the United States use its influence to restrain Chen and also to publicly state its support for the one-China policy, preferably before a January 17 Democratic Progressive Party meeting focusing on constitutional reform. AFM He also asked that the United States prevent Frank Hsieh from attending the upcoming National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. The Charge told AFM He our understanding is that Chen's stopovers will be private and unofficial and are consistent with our longstanding transit practices. He reiterated the United States' adherence to our one-China policy and urged China to engage with Taiwan to work toward a peaceful resolution of cross-Straits issues. As for the National Prayer Breakfast, because it is not an official event, the United States Government does not control invitations, the Charge said. End Summary.

AFM He: Stop the Transits, or At Least Keep Them Quiet

12. (C) AFM He called the Charge into the MFA January 8 to express China's dissatisfaction over and opposition to Chen transiting San Francisco and Los Angeles en route to Nicaragua. FM Li, traveling in Botswana, called the Secretary to discuss the matter January 7, he said. AFM He said China urges the United States to prevent Chen from using the stopovers to engage in "separatist activity," particularly barring him from meeting with Government representatives, local officials or Members of Congress. AFM He stressed that it is very important to China that the United States not allow Chen to make public statements or appearances or grant media interviews. The Charge responded that our understanding is that the stopovers are private and unofficial and will be consistent with the purpose of

our longstanding transit policy. While there will be no meetings between Chen and administration officials, we do not control the activities of Members of Congress or local officials. Ray Burghardt, AIT/W Chair, will meet with Chen, the Charge said.

Chen's "Separatist Intentions"

¶3. (C) AFM He maintained that the United States should keep in mind the larger picture in dealing with the transit issue. According to Chen's words and behavior and the MFA's "information," AFM He asserted that Chen has clear, immediate plans to push for constitutional reform and to step up efforts to gain de jure independence for Taiwan. Chen has a timetable and is proceeding in a step-by-step manner to implement his plans. Toward this end, Chen will use the "second republic" approach, mirroring his strategy of ceasing the functions of the National Unification Council last February. Chen has three specific goals for the transit stops, AFM He claimed: a) to create the impression at home and internationally that the United States supports his activities, b) to "trumpet separatist remarks" and his independence agenda to a wider audience and c) to create tensions across the Strait, provoke the Mainland and undermine United States-China relations.

¶4. (C) AFM He said the stopovers, taken with what China views as other deliberate steps, indicate a clear sign of Chen's separatist intentions. AFM He cited the dispatch of DPP representative Yao Jia-wen, "a hard core separatist," to attend the memorial

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ceremony for President Ford last week as an example. During the visit, Yao made public remarks favoring separatism, AFM He alleged. In addition, the DPP will convene a Party meeting January 17 to discuss constitutional reform proposals containing Taiwan independence elements. Finally, Chen intends to send former Kaohsiung mayor and DPP member Frank Hsieh to Washington to attend the National Prayer Breakfast as a special envoy.

China Hopes United States Looks at "Big Picture"

¶5. (C) China and the United States have important common strategic interests, AFM He continued, including maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and countering separatist activities. AFM He said China appreciates previous statements by President Bush and the Administration reiterating our one-China policy and takes note of steps the United States has taken, "publicly and privately," to restrain Chen. China is prepared to build on positive momentum in bilateral ties and further expand the United States-China relationship, AFM He asserted, adding that Chen should never be permitted to undermine our cooperation. But, AFM He claimed that the transit stops, especially the inclusion of an overnight stay, send the wrong signal. While AFM He said he is aware the Taiwan issue is not an easy one for the United States, he stressed that China hopes the United States will "look at the big picture" and not allow the transit stops or Hsieh's attendance at the Prayer Breakfast, both of which risk increasing tensions across the Strait.

No Change in One-China Policy

¶6. (C) The Charge responded that as President Bush has said, our one-China polity remains unchanged. Our

commitment to the one-China policy, based on the three Joint Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act, is very firm, the Charge said, assuring AFM He that the United States always takes a big picture perspective when considering Taiwan issues. In connection with this, while the United States does not support Taiwan independence, we continue to urge people on both sides of the Strait to engage in dialogue to move toward a peaceful resolution that is acceptable to both sides. The United States opposes unilateral steps from either side that change the status quo. The Charge repeated the message he has conveyed in meetings on the transit issue during the past week (reflets), that is, that the United States will continue to act responsibly in dealing with the Taiwan issue. The transit stops are not meant as an indication of United States support for Chen's alleged political plans and in no way alter our aim of furthering peace and stability across the strait, the Charge emphasized.

¶7. (C) Turning to the National Prayer Breakfast issue, the Charge told AFM He that the event is not an official gathering, and as such, the United States Government does not control invitations. As for Yao's remarks, the Charge reminded AFM He that the United States does not place limitations on the freedom of speech of visitors and has no responsibility for or control over what Yao may have said. In addition, the United States did not treat Yao as a government official during his visit, which he conducted in a private capacity.

SEDNEY